

riptide 2025.... holy shit. what an experience. i got home yesterday, and after the 15 hour drive home, PROMPTLY passed the fuck out.

so now i've had some time to collect my thoughts, and if you'd like to come along with me and hear them, please do.

i'm gonna talk about some heavy topics, namely suicidal thoughts & abuse, and my mental health journey, so if you don't have the capacity for these topics right now, i'm going to discuss them at the END of this huge, rambling slop.

riptide 2025 was an event that shook me to my core, made me realize my value and impact in my community, and for the first time in my life made me realize that i am truly making myself known in a community i deserve, and love dearly. thank you so much, from the bottom of my heart, to the friends new and known, that screamed with me, were silly with me, hugged me and made me feel so wholly loved. i will see you all next year and we will do it all again, i promise.

i owe a very special thank you to my best friend jester, who you may know as the captain of Washed, a div 7 team that EVERYONE should have eyes on.

jester has been one of my key supports over the last 6 months. meeting her, getting to yap in the car, getting to hold hands in the lazy river (we aint talking about the blind grabbing of my dogs here.), getting to boil in the soup, getting to make instant yakisoba with CORNNN and TOPPINGSSSS, are memories i will hold close to my heart for the rest of my live, no matter how many more times we do it in the future.

thank you, jester, for giving me the first wholly safe environment i've been in in months. thank you for listening, laughing, and including me, introducing me to new people who i know will be longtime friends— all of it, both in the weekend that passed and every day before that.

i love you, you deserve everything good in the world. we WILL hyperdive through that 35mph curve again. sorry i accidentally tried to clicker train you.

to everyone who rushed up to me, who signed my posters, who flipped off sterling, who showed even the slightest interest in my OC lore, i love you so much.

realizing that people *recognize* carmine, who screamed about them with genuine excitement and RECOGNIZED THEM??? genuinely rocked my shit and changed how i view myself in this community. i always felt like an outsider— i'm a long time salmon runner and (new) overfisher, slightly known in the zine scene, but comp is another thing that i've only recently gotten into (thanks to jester!).

but like. i dunno man. seeing artists i've admired for months do double takes and scream "WAIT THIS IS YOUR OC? I SEE THEM EVERYWHERE I LOVE THIS OC!" (LOOKING AT YOU

CAMO 🥺🥺🥺) literally almost made me cry from joy. its insane, realizing that people regard me and my creations with love and warmth. thank you so much.

having mutuals message me,(shoutout to len and glack and boop and emcar!!!!!!) asking specifically where i was because they wanted to see ME, and say hi, and trade stickers and give me trading cards, literally made me so happy i felt lightheaded.

Emcar, thank you for running around with me for signatures, and yapping, and being the number one sterling flipper offer. fuck that stinky old man!!!!

Krill Streak: thank you for enthusiastically putting sterling through mickeys dick smasher. your bubbly vibes and infectious energy had me on a high that carried me long through the drive home. nox, thank you for giving me your last flag, i will cherish it in all of its scuffed as hell glory forever. sterlings holding it at home right now LOLLL. yall fucked it UPPPPP!!!!

to rose, and malibu rising, thank you for sitting with us and giving us your stickers and being such a warm and comforting presence on a crazy tourney floor. can't wait to tune in to the streams again soon!

to pjackk challenge: holy fucking SHIT, guys. yall are the reason my voice is completely gone. watching your matches on stream in the hotel room had me so excited my watch started yelling at me when my heart rate went over 120. those sets yall played are what are inspiring me to branch out and get back into comp, which i havent participated in since 2016, when i was a liter/hydra two trick for a local team as a kid. (eliter 3k forever btw i need my wife to have burst bomb again). yall are legendary. pjackk forever!!

(oven specifically: thank you for buttons! they're INCREDIBLE!!!!!! i will cherish them always, and next year i will be getting more if you do them again LOLL. it was so nice to meet you in person.)

the sterling flip off compilation video is coming, promise LOL

here's the heavy stuff, so feel free to stop reading here if you want

longtime followers of mine know that i live in a severely financially, mentally, and sometimes physically abusive household, and that i have been unable to escape for years thanks to the extent that my father extorts me for money.

genuinely, i did not think that i was going to be able to make it to riptide in the end, and that i would not only have let down all my friends who wanted me there, but also jester, who was relying on me as we were rooming together, and i was driving.

this fear followed me up until the point where i was literally at the check in desk.

being able to do this, and being able to afford this, is the largest blessing i have attained all year. being able to do this has helped me realize that i *can* have these things. that i CAN thrive in a safe, non traumatizing environment, and that there are people who will support me within that.

my home environment, coupled with a major traumatizing event that happened to me in 2024, has left my mental health in shambles. suicidal ideation has been my constant for as long as i remember. i've always struggled with enjoying things, feeling emotions in appropriate amounts, and especially looking to the future. last years impact on my emotional faculties and psyche have been hitting especially hard lately, and i can't lie, i've been in a dark place.

but i want this for myself again next year, and the year after that, and onwards.

thank you everyone from the absolute bottom of my heart, for everything that you've done for me.

i cannot wait for next year. i know i'll see you there.

-emil